

An Order Establishing the Governor's Task Force on Wind Power Development in Maine

May 8, 2007

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WHEREAS, Maine energy policy seeks to promote the development and use of renewable energy sources to help reduce Maine's dependence on imported fossil fuels, provide economic development, and promote security; and

WHEREAS, scientists have concluded that increases in greenhouse gas levels, including but not limited to carbon dioxide, are resulting in worldwide climate change; and

WHEREAS, wind power does not generate greenhouse gases and is broadly viewed as having fewer environmental impacts than other forms of electrical power generation; and

WHEREAS, wind power is the fastest growing utility-scale source of renewable energy in the world; and

WHEREAS, Maine has the highest wind potential of any New England state and ranks 19th in terms of wind potential in the United States as a whole; and

WHEREAS, wind power development can provide short term and long term economic and employment benefits for Maine citizens; and

WHEREAS, the State's wind resources occur in various areas of the State that may have important ecological, natural resource, remote resource, and other values that are important to Maine people that can lead to conflict regarding the siting of wind power facilities; and

WHEREAS, Maine could become a leader in New England in the development of wind power if a comprehensive approach is pursued that involves guidelines that direct wind power toward appropriate locations; well-designed and efficient regulations; the protection of areas where wind power is not appropriate; and collaboration among state agencies, wind power developers, interested parties, and the public.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby establish the Governor's Task Force on Wind Power Development in Maine.

Purpose and Duties

The purpose and duties of the Task Force shall be to:

1. Examine the regulatory process and review criteria by which wind power projects currently are evaluated in Maine, identify barriers to wind power development and compare Maine's policies with approaches used in other jurisdictions;
2. Identify and recommend any changes deemed beneficial for assuring that Maine has a balanced, efficient and appropriate regulatory framework for evaluating wind power projects. Changes might include, but are not limited to, updating statutory and regulatory review criteria, technology-specific wind power siting guidelines, opportunities for streamlined permitting for certain categories of wind power projects and the use of negotiated settlement tools for resolving conflicts;
3. Propose policy changes that would help facilitate the development of wind power in Maine and establish a lead agency for tracking wind power generated in Maine, monitoring technological advances in wind power generation and providing educational materials regarding wind power;
4. Examine and make appropriate recommendations regarding Federal, State and local programs and financing options available to assist in the development of wind power projects;

5. Identify a range of options, benefits and incentives that might be available to communities that are affected by wind power projects;
6. Create guidelines and related information that would assist wind power developers in identifying areas in the State of Maine that are more appropriate for wind power development, and avoiding areas that are not appropriate for wind power development, due to legal, natural resource or public value constraints; and
7. Propose goals for installed wind power in Maine for 2010 and 2020, provide an estimate of the economic and emission-reduction benefits of achieving such goals and suggest strategies to attain those goals.

To fulfill these duties, the Task Force shall collaborate and coordinate with the Land Use Regulation Commission, the Department of Marine Resources, the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Department of Agriculture, the Public Utilities Commission, the Office of the Governor, members of the Maine Legislature and other interested members of the public.

The establishment of this Task Force is not intended to delay or interfere with wind power projects that are already in the permitting process.

Membership. The Governor shall appoint 16 members to the Task Force. One member shall be the Commissioner of the Department of Conservation, or his designee; one member shall be the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection, or his designee; one member shall be the Director for the Office of Energy Independence and Security; one member shall be the Commissioner of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, or his designee; and one member shall be the Director of the State Planning Office or her designee. The remaining appointments shall include diverse members with relevant knowledge and experience in wind power development, land use and conservation policies and regulation, renewable energy policies, electricity and transmission policies and infrastructure, natural resource and remote recreation values, and environmental impacts from electrical power generation. The President of the Senate may appoint two members of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House may appoint two members of the House of Representatives.

Members shall serve at the pleasure of their appointing authority. The Governor shall appoint the chair of the task force from among the members. The chair will schedule, set the agenda for, and preside at Task Force meetings.

Staff support to the Task Force will be provided by the Land Use Regulation Commission, the State Planning Office, Department of Environmental Protection, and other state agencies as needed. The members of the Task Force shall serve without compensation.

Report. The Task Force shall submit its recommendations to the Governor no later than January 15, 2008, after which the Task Force will dissolve.

Effective Date The effective date of this Executive Order is May 8, 2007.

John E. Baldacci, Governor